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MANUAL

OF THE

Orthodox Congregational Church,

BILLERICA, MASS.

CONTAINING ITS

HISTORY,

FORM OF ADMISSION,

CONFESSION OF FAITH,

COVENANT,

STANDING RULES,

AND

LIST OF MEMBERS.

PREPARED AND PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CHURCH.
FOR THE USE OF THE MEMBERS.

1855.

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BILLERICA, MASS. ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.
Manual of the Orthodox Congregational church, Billerica, Mass., containing its history, form of admission, confession of faith, covenant, standing rules, and list of members. [Boston, Mudge] 1855.
20p.

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MANUAL

OF THE

Orthodox Congregational Church,

BILLERICA, MASS.

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MUDGE & SON'S POWER-PRESS,
21 School Street, Boston.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Orthodox Congregational Church in Billerica was organized April 30, 1829, with twenty-five members. The meeting-house was dedicated to the worship of the Triune God on the 13th of January, 1830. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization of the Church was observed April 30th, 1854. The Confession of Faith and Covenant were revised by direction of the Church, and adopted in their present form by vote of the Church, December 24th, 1854. The following is a list of its

PASTORS.

Rev. John Starkweather, ordained April 22d, 1830; dismissed August 2d, 1831.

Rev. Joseph Haven, installed June 8th, 1836; dismissed September 27th, 1840.

Rev. Benjamin Ela, ordained April 29th, 1841; dismissed May, 1842.

Rev. J. G. D. Stearns, ordained May 10th, 1843.

DEACONS.

William Gleason and Aaron H. Patten were the first deacons. Deacon Gleason died September 26th, 1844, aged 82.

Edward Wright was chosen in 1845.

FORM OF ADMISSION.

ADDRESS.

Beloved Friends :

You have presented yourselves before God and this assembly to make a solemn profession of your religious faith, and to take upon you everlasting obligations. We trust that you have duly considered the nature of the professions you are about to make, and the engagements into which you are about to enter. They are of the most solemn moment, and upon their faithful observance, your christian usefulness and your everlasting happiness will depend.

But be not disheartened; if you are truly sincere in these professions and engagements, and have heartily consecrated yourselves to Christ, He will give you wisdom and strength to fulfil your obligations, and will conduct you safely through this brief state of probation to His heavenly kingdom.

As the connection you are now forming is so important to our mutual welfare, it is proper that we propose for your acceptance, at this time, that Confession of Faith which is the ground of our union, and that Covenant by which we are bound together.

You will now attend to

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

ARTICLE I. We believe there is one GOD, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of the universe; a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Deut. vi, 4; Gen. i, 1; Neh. ix, 6; 1 Chron. xxix, 11; Psalm ciii, 19; John iv, 24; 1 Ki. viii, 27; Ps. xc, 2; Mal. iii, 6; James i, 17; Ps. cxlvii, 5; Rev. xix, 6—iv, 8; Ps. xcix, 9—xcvii, 2; Deut. xxxii, 4; Rev. xv, 3, 4; Ps. cxix, 68; Ex. xxxiv, 6.

ART. II. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are an inspired and infallible revelation from God to man, and are the only perfect rule of religious faith and practice.

2 Tim. iii, 16, 17; 2 Peter i, 19, 21; Heb. i, 1, 2; Isaiah viii, 20; John x, 35; Luke xxiv, 44; Romans xv, 4; John v, 39—xvii, 17; Ps. xix, 7—cxix, 105: Gal. i, 8, 11, 12; Rev. xxii, 18, 19—i, 3.

ART. III. We believe there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that these three are one God, and in all divine attributes equal.

Matt. xxviii, 19; 2 Cor. xiii, 14; John i, 1, 2, 3, 10—xx, 28—xvii, 5; Romans ix, 5; 1 John i, 2—v, 20; Isaiah, ix, 6; Heb. i, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10; Col. i, 16, 17; Matt. xviii, 20—xxviii, 20; John ii, 24—xxi, 17; Matt. xiv, 33—xv, 25; Luke xxiv, 52; Rev. v, 11-13—vii, 9, 10; John v, 17, 18, 23; Phil. ii, 6; Acts v, 3, 4; Heb. ix, 14; 1 Cor. ii, 10, 11, 13; Jno. xiv, 26—xvi, 7, 13, 15.

ART. IV. We believe that God from all eternity, for His own glory, foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; that He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; and that the Divine purposes and agency are consistent with the free agency and accountability of man.

1 Peter i, 20; Isaiah xlvi, 9, 10—xiv, 24, 27—xliii, 7; Eph. iii, 10, 11—ii, 10—i, 4-6, 9-12; Prov. xvi, 4; Rev. iv, 11; Daniel, iv, 35—ix, 2, 3; Acts, xvii, 26—ii, 23—iv, 27, 28—xxvii, 24, 30, 31; Romans ix, 17; Ex. vii, 3—viii, 15; 1 Sam. vi, 6; Phil. ii, 12, 13; Romans xiv, 12.

ART. V. We believe that God created our first parents holy; that they fell from that state by eating the forbidden fruit; that in consequence of this transgression all mankind become sinners, and, while unregenerate, are wholly indisposed to spiritual good, inclined to evil, and justly liable to the penalty of the Divine law.

Eccl. vii, 29; Gen. i, 27—iii, 6; Romans v, 12, 19—iii, 10, 12, 19, 23—vii, 18—viii, 7, 8; 2 Cor. v, 14; John vii, 7; 1 John v, 19; Ps. xiv, 3; Gen. vi, 5, 12; Jer. xvii, 9; Eccl. viii, 11—ix, 3; Ps. li, 5—lviii, 3; Eph. ii, 1, 3; Romans i, 18; Gal. iii, 10.

ART. VI. We believe that God, in His mercy, gave His Son Jesus Christ to redeem lost men; that He became incarnate, and by His sufferings and death, made an atonement for the sins of the world; by virtue of which, as the only meritorious cause, He procures the justification, adoption and salvation of believers.

John iii, 16; Gal. iv, 4, 5; John i, 14; 1 Tim. iii, 16; Phil. ii, 7, 8; Heb. ii, 14-17; 1 John iii, 5—ii, 2—iv, 10; Heb. ix, 15, 26, 28—x, 14; 1 Peter iii, 18—ii, 24; Romans v, 19—iii, 20-26, 28; Titus iii, 5; Gal. ii, 16—iii, 10, 11, 13, 14, 22, 26; Eph. i, 7; 1 Cor. i, 30—vi, 11; Mark xvi, 16; John i, 29—iii, 14, 15, 36—v, 24—vi, 40.

ART. VII. We believe that God offers salvation freely and sincerely to all men on condition of repentance for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that men have natural power to comply with these conditions; but that such is their love of sin and aversion to holiness, that none comply without the special grace of God.

Mark xvi, 15, 16; Luke xxiv, 47- xiii, 5; Acts ii, 38—iii, 19—xvii, 30—xx, 21—xvi, 31; Romans x, 9, 11; John vii, 37—iii, 15; Isaiah xlv, 22—lv, 1—xlviii, 18; Ez. xviii, 23, 32—xxxiii, 11; John v, 44—vi, 44—v, 40; Jer. xiii, 23; Romans viii, 7; Eph. ii, 8, 9; John iii, 5; Rom. ix, 15, 16; 1 Cor. iv, 7—ii, 14—xv, 10; 2 Timothy i, 9.

ART. VIII. We believe that God from eternity determined to convert and save a certain portion of mankind; and that, while this does not in the least degree impair the freedom or hinder the conversion of others, it secures the salvation of a multitude which no man can number.

Eph. i, 4, 5—iii, 11; 2 Thes. ii, 13; Romans xi, 5—viii, 28, 29; 1 Pe. i, 2; 1 Thes. i, 4; Matt. xxiv, 22, 24; Acts xiii, 48; 2 Tim. i, 9; 2 Pe. i, 10; John vi, 37—xvii, 2, 6; Rev. vii, 9.

ART. IX. We believe that God regenerates and sanctifies His people by His Word and Spirit; and that the evidences of regeneration are supreme love to God, and obedience to His commands.

Psl. cx, 3; John i, 12, 13—iii, 3, 5, 6; James i, 18; 1 Peter i, 22, 23; Ez. xxxvi, 26, 27; Eph. iv, 24—ii, 1—v, 9; Gal. v, 6, 22; 2 Cor. v, 17; 1 John iv, 7, 8—v, 2, 3, 4—ii, 29; James ii, 17, 18; Romans viii, 9; Matt. vii, 18, 20; John xiv, 15, 21.

ART. X. We believe that all who are renewed by the Holy Spirit will persevere in faith and holiness to the end of life, and, by God's mercy, attain to everlasting felicity.

Jude 24; 1 Pe. i, 3-5; Phil. i, 6; 1 John ii, 19; Romans viii, 30, 38, 39; John vi, 39—x, 27-29; Jer. xxxii, 40; Ps. xxxvii, 23, 24; Job xvii, 9; Prov. iv, 18; Isaiah liv, 10—lv, 3.

ART. XI. We believe that the soul is immortal; that this life is the only season of probation for eternity; that at the end of the world there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; that there will be a day of judgment, when all mankind will appear before the tribunal of Christ the Judge, and receive according to their works; and that the blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will never end.

Eccl. xii, 7; Romans, ii. 6, 7; 2 Tim. i, 10; 2 Cor. v, 8; Luke xxiii, 43—xvi, 22, 23, 25—xii, 5—xiii, 24-28; Gal. vi, 7, 8; 2 Cor. vi, 2; Isa. lv, 6; 1 Chron. xxviii, 9; John viii, 21, 24; Matt. x, 28—xvi, 26—xiii, 40. 49; John xii, 48—vi, 40—v, 28, 29; Acts iv, 2—xxiv, 15—xxvi, 8; Luke xx, 37; 1 Cor. xv, 21-23; Rev. xx, 11-15—xxi, 8, 27; Heb. ix, 27; Eccl. xii, 14; Acts xvii, 31—x, 42; 2 Cor. v, 2; Romans xiv, 10—ii, 16; Luke x, 14; Matt. xii, 36; 2 Peter ii, 4, 9; Jude 6, 7; 2 Thess. i, 9; Daniel xii, 2; Mark ix, 43, 45—iii, 29; Matt. xii, 32—iii, 12—xxv, 31-46.

ART. XII. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has on earth a visible Church; that those only have a right to membership in it who give credible evidence of regeneration; that the Sacraments of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; that Baptism is to be administered to believers and their children, and to them alone; that members of the Church are solemnly bound to have this seal of the covenant set upon their offspring, and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that the Lord's Supper is to be administered only to members of the Church in regular standing.

Matt. xvi, 18; Col. i, 18; Eph. i, 22, 23—v, 23-27; Acts ii, 47; Matt. xxviii, 19; Luke xxii, 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi, 23-26; Acts ii, 38—xvi, 15; 1 Cor. vii, 14; Gen. xvii, 7, 10; Gal. iii, 17, 8, 9, 14, 29; Romans xi, 16, 17, 24—iv, 11, 12, 16; Col. ii, 11, 12; Acts ii, 39; Eph. vi, 4; Deut. vi, 6, 7; Isa. lix, 21; 1 Cor. v, 7, 8—xi, 27, 29; 2 Cor. xiii, 5.

All these things you truly profess and heartily believe?

[Here administer Baptism.]

You will now enter into Covenant with God and this Church.

THE COVENANT.

In the presence of Almighty God, His holy angels, and this assembly, you now solemnly avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be your God, the supreme object of your affection, and your chosen portion forever. You cordially acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, in all His mediatorial offices—Prophet, Priest and King,—as your only Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier, Comforter and Guide. You humbly and cheerfully devote yourselves to God in the everlasting covenant of His grace, and consecrate all your powers and affections to His service and glory; and you promise that, through the assistance of His Spirit, you will cleave to Him as your chief good; that you will give diligent attendance on His word and ordinances; that you will seek the honor and interest of His kingdom; and that, henceforth, denying ungodliness and every worldly lust, you will live soberly, righteously and godly in the world.

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You do now cordially join yourselves to this Church of Christ, and engage to submit with a christian temper to the rules of government and discipline which it has adopted; to strive for its peace, edification and purity; and to walk with all its members in charity, faithfulness, circumspection, meekness and sobriety.

You also engage to watch over the members of this Church with the spirit of love and tenderness; to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; to promote the great interests of morality and religion; to aid the spread of the gospel in the world; and to do whatsoever you know or may know to be your duty.

Thus you covenant and promise?

[Here the members of the Church will rise.]

We, then, the members of this Church, affectionately receive you to our communion, and in the name of Christ declare you entitled to all its privileges; we welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the gospel, and, on our part, engage to treat you with all that affection which is required by our sacred relation; to watch over you for your good, with meekness and tenderness; to seek your christian edification, and to pray that you may have grace to fulfil this solemn covenant.

And now, beloved in the Lord, suffer us to remind you of the solemnity of these obligations—which, indeed, were always upon you, but which you now thus publicly recognize. While this consecrating vow engages the Lord more fully on your side, it also binds you more strongly to His service. For time and for eternity, you are one with the people of God.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace; the Lord make us mutual blessings; guide us all through life, and bring us at last to Mount Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads. AMEN.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH; PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES. II COR. XIII, 5.

Do I fulfil my covenant duties and obligations?

Do I "search the scriptures" daily, and regulate my life by their teachings?

Do I daily pray in secret, and in my family?

Do I live in any known habit of sin, or in the neglect of any known duty?

Do I cherish a strong attachment for the Church, and actively seek its prosperity?

Do I love all christians, irrespective of denominational distinctions, and labor for the conversion of sinners?

Do I aid, systematically, the cause of christian benevolence, giving as God prospers me?

Do I love the Lord's day, the sanctuary, the Sabbath-school, and the prayer meeting?

Do I habitually make progress in holiness, and become more and more Christ-like, and heavenly minded?

STANDING RULES.

I. All meetings for business shall be opened with prayer.

II. A meeting after a preparatory lecture, or at any other time when notified from the pulpit by the pastor, or by his order, or by the request of three members, shall be regular for the transaction of business.

III. All standing committees and officers for the year, shall be chosen by ballot.

IV. After the preparatory lecture, prior to the Communion in January, a Clerk shall be chosen to keep the Records; a Treasurer to keep the money, who shall make an annual report; and a Committee, of whom the pastor and deacons shall compose a part, to examine applicants for admission to the Church.

V. The Examining Committee shall examine all applicants for admission, and present to the Church the names of such as they approve.

VI. Persons may be admitted by letter at any regular meeting, or on the Sabbath-day; those who unite by profession shall be propounded to the Church at least two weeks previous to their admission, and, having been received by a vote of the Church, at a regular meeting, shall, on publicly assenting to the Articles of Faith and the Covenant, become members in full communion.

VII. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sabbath in January, March, May, July, September and November. A contribution shall be taken up at the close

of each communion, to defray the special expenses of the Church.

VIII. Members of this Church who remove from town, are expected to transfer their church relation to some Church in or near the place where they reside, within one year of the time of their removal, unless they give satisfactory reasons to the Examining Committee for delay. Any member receiving a letter of dismission and recommendation to another Church, must present it within six months, or have it renewed. Notice is expected from such a Church whenever a member is received.

IX. Members of sister Churches who wish to commune with this Church for more than one year, are requested to remove their church relation to us, unless there be special reasons for delay.

X. These rules may be repealed or amended at any regular meeting of the Church; provided the alteration shall have been proposed at a previous meeting.

MEMBERS' NAMES.

EXPLANATION.

In the following list of members, the letter *L* annexed to the date of admission denotes that the members were received from other churches; an asterisk, [*], denotes that those to whose names it is annexed have died; an obelisk, [†], that they have been dismissed to other churches; [*ex.*] excommunicated. A blank column is reserved on the right of each page for noticing dismissions, deaths, &c. A few blank leaves also are found at the end, for receiving the names of those who may be admitted hereafter. It is recommended to every church member to keep a record, both of admissions and dismissions, that they may always know both the number and the names of those with whom they have entered into solemn covenant.

PASTOR.

J. G. D. STEARNS.

DEACONS.

AARON H. PATTEN, | EDWARD WRIGHT.

MEMBERS.

NAMES.	ADMITTED.			REMARKS.
William Gleason,*	1829, Apr. 30,		L	See Ch. Re. page 16.
Aaron H. Patten,	"	"	L	
Ebenezer Stimpson,†	"	"	L	
Seth Johnson,	"	"	L	
William S. Gleason,	"	"	L	
John Magill,	"	"		
Sarah Gleason,*	"	"	L	Died, Dec. 15, 1852.
Sarah Sprague,†	"	"	L	
Sarah Underwood,†	"	"	L	
Mary Dana,*	"	"		Died, Apr. 21, 1850.
Lydia Johnson,*	"	"	L	Died, Dec. 1, 1850.
Lucy H. Stimpson,†	"	"		
Eliza Patten,	"	"	L	
Betsey Wyman,	"	"	L	
Sarah P. Brown,	"	"	L	
Martha Bowers,*	"	"	L	Died, Oct. 1830.

NAMES.	ADMITTED.	REMARKS.
Mary Fletcher,	1829, Ap. 30, L	
Mary F. Shattuck,†	" " L	
Margaret Magill,	" "	
Martha J. French,†	" "	
Hannah Fletcher,	" "	
Abigail H. G. Crosby,†	" " L	
Mary Ann Gleason,	" " L	
E. Gleason (Goldsmith)†	" " L	
Louisa G. (Richardson)†	" " L	
Adaline Durant,†	" Nov. 8, L	
Patty Ruggles,*	1830, Jan. 17,	Died, Mar. 30, 1831.
Abigail Jaquith,*	" " L	Died, Oct. 10, 1844.
Mary Mears,	" Sept. 5.	
Elizabeth Brown,†	" " L	
Lucy Ruggles,†	" "	
James Kemp, *ex.*	1831, June 5, L	
Sarah Cutter,	" "	
Elizabeth Jeffs,*	" Sept. 4.	
Sarah Temple,	" " L	
Rufus Cutter,	1832, Jan. 8.	
Elizabeth Moore,	" "	
Sally Marshall,†	" "	
Solomon Cutter,*	" June 3,	Died, Feb. 23, 1846.
Sarah Cutter,*	" "	Died, Dec. 28, 1840.
Elizabeth Walker,†	" "	
C. Fostick, (Goodwin)†	" "	Rev. Mr. Jones supplied the pulpit from July 1832 to Ap. '34.
Isaac Jones,†	1833, July 31, L	
Nancy Jones,†	" " L	
Hannah Marshall,*	1834, July 6,	Died, July 22, 1845.
Sarah O. Barnes,†	1835, Mar. 2, L	
Warren Fletcher,†	" " L	
Susan B. Fletcher,†	" " L	
Dorcas Snow,	" Nov. 5.	
Joseph Haven,†	1836, July 3, L	Rev., see Hist. Sket.
Elizabeth Haven,†	" " L	
Hannah Hill,†	" Aug. 5, L	
Mary Kemp,	1837, July 2.	
Elizabeth Stephens,†	" "	
Laura Whittier,†	" " L	
Daniel Wilson,*	" Sept. 3, L	Died, Dec. 22, 1852.
Mary Wilson,*	" " L	Died, Dec. 7, 1846.
Hannah Radding,	" " L	

NAMES.	ADMITTED.	REMARKS.
Sarah Walker,	1837, Sept. 3.	
Harriet Pierson,†	1838, Nov.	
Marion Gillion,	" "	
Stephen Winter,	1840, Jan. 5, L	
Hannah Winter,	" " L	
Mary E. Wright,	" " L	
J.B.Wilson(Andrews)†	" "	
Mary Baker, (Gleason,)	" "	
Edward Wright,	" Sept. 6.	
Jonathan E. Reed,†	1841, May 9, L	
Esther Hills,	" " L	
E. A.Winter, (Dodge)*	" "	Died, Nov. 25, 1845.
Emeline Blodgett,	" July 4.	
Susan C. Danforth,	" Sept. 5, L	
Mrs. John Davis,†	1842, May 1, L	
Orin Fairbank,†	1843, Jan'y 8, L	
Nancy W. Fairbank,†	" " L	
Judith Kendall,	" "	
Harriet Kendall,	" "	
Sarah C. Blodgett,	" "	
Sarah Blodgett,*	" July 2,	Died, Jan. 18, 1849.
John Baker,*	" "	Died, Sept. 15, 1844.
Sarah Baker,	" "	
Anne Page,	" " L	
M. J. Patten, (King,)	1848, July 2.	
Elvira Rogers,	" Sept. 3.	
Ariel Work,	1849, Jan'y 7, L	
Sarah B. Work,	" " L	
Isabella McCool,†	" Mar. 4, L	
Jane Dodge,†	" May, L	
Mary Champney,	" July 1.	
Thomas J. Jenkins,	" Nov. 4, L	
Lucy M. Stearns,	" " L	
Joseph Noyes,	1850, July 7, L	
Nancy Noyes,	" " L	
Sophia Glover,	" " L	
Mary Ann Farmer,	" Sept. 1, L	
Mehitable Sperry,	" " L	
Hannah Salter,	" "	
H.R.Fletch.(Johnson)†	" "	
M.McCool (Campbell)†	1851, Mar. 2, L	
Justus Wright,	" Sept. 7.	

NAMES.	ADMITTED.	REMARKS.
Ann Maria Bowen,	1852, July 4.	
Mary H. Gleason,	" Sept. 5, L	
Daniel W. Averill,	" "	
Mary Ann Averill,	" "	
Mary E. Fletcher,	" "	
Samuel Henry King,	" Nov. 4, L	
Catharine Abbott,	1853, March 6.	
Eben White,	" May 1.	
Dorothy White,	1854, May 7, L	
J. G. D. Stearns,	" Aug. 31, L	
Martha Ann Bowers,	" " L	
Nancy Treadwell,	" Nov. 5, L	
John H. Richardson,	" "	
Jacob D. Burtt,	" Dec. 15, L	
Annah B. Burtt,	" " L	

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